



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Monthly Retail Trade

Sales and Inventories

April 1997

BR/97-4
Issued July 1997

NOTICE: The estimates in this report reflect the introduction of a new sample based on a new sample design. See Appendix A for an explanation of sample selection and sample design.

Sales. Total sales for all retail stores in the United States during April 1997 were an estimated \$210.4 billion. These estimates were adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. The month-to-month percentage change from March 1997 sales was an estimated -0.9 (± 0.3) percent, while the year-to-year change from April 1996 was estimated +3.9 (± 0.9) percent.

Excluding the automotive group, the April sales were -0.4 (± 0.2) percent when compared to the March 1997 sales, while the change from April 1996 was +3.7 (± 0.5) percent.

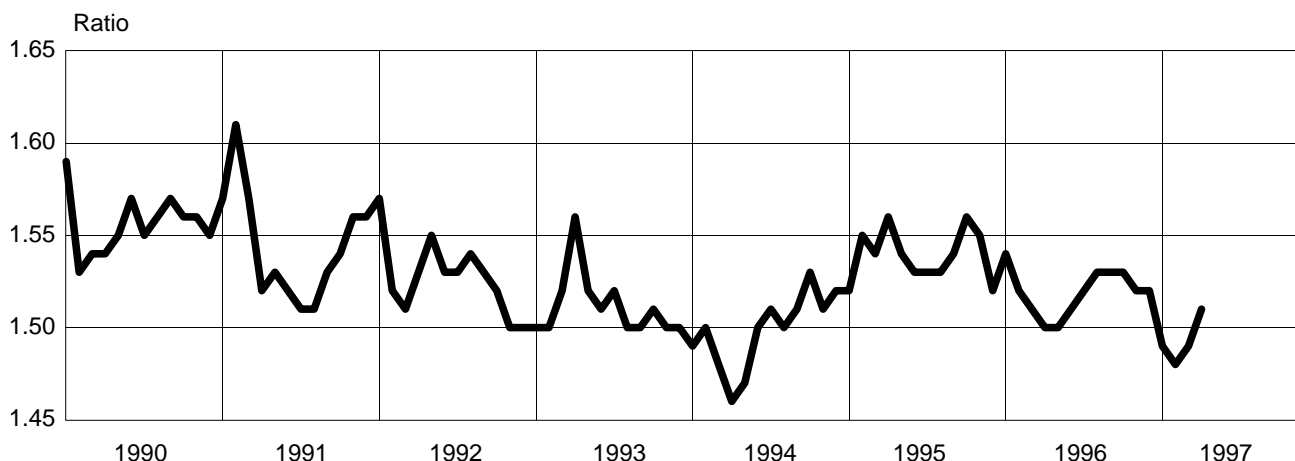
The year-to-year changes for the major kinds of business ranged from the building materials group stores, which were +9.2 (± 3.8) percent, to the apparel group stores, which were -1.2 (± 1.5) percent.

Inventories. After adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, total retail inventories in stores and warehouses servicing retail establishments were an estimated \$317.8 billion at the end of April. The month-to-month percentage change from March inventories was an estimated +0.7 (± 0.3) and was an estimated +4.3 (± 1.4) percent above April 1996.

For durable goods stores the percentage change from March was +0.7 (± 0.5) percent, while the change from April 1996 was +5.3 (± 2.2) percent. For nondurable goods stores, the month-to-month change from March was +0.8 (± 0.2) percent, while the year-to-year change from April 1996 was +3.2 (± 0.9) percent.

The total inventories/sales ratio for April based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.51, up .01 from April a year ago.

Figure 1.
Retail Inventories/Sales Ratios: January 1990 – April 1997
(Seasonally adjusted, but not adjusted for price changes)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is in Appendix B.

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Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997				1996										Total 4 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr. ^P	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1997	1996	
	Unadjusted																
	Retail sales, total	186,064	183,530	209,973	205,388	198,610	213,754	204,705	204,817	212,247	195,749	207,531	210,236	244,719	784,955	751,538	
	Total (excl. automotive group) .	140,539	136,278	155,319	151,979	147,447	158,666	152,745	152,803	159,851	147,371	156,473	164,872	201,187	584,115	558,409	
	Durable goods, total	74,051	75,424	86,718	86,963	82,958	90,210	85,962	86,024	87,258	80,509	84,794	80,826	90,163	323,156	307,590	
52	Building materials group stores . .	8,859	8,870	11,081	12,870	11,936	13,348	12,892	12,718	12,300	11,634	12,316	10,921	10,350	41,680	38,006	
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	7,975	7,942	9,788	11,189	10,164	11,309	10,932	11,111	10,752	10,086	10,784	9,702	8,967	36,894	33,510	
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	6,862	6,964	8,645	9,851	8,817	9,830	9,514	9,758	9,454	8,898	9,478	8,403	7,608	32,322	29,036	
525	Hardware stores	1,113	978	1,143	1,338	1,347	1,479	1,418	1,353	1,298	1,188	1,306	1,299	1,359	4,572	4,474	
55 ex 554	Automotive group	45,525	47,252	54,654	53,409	51,163	55,088	51,960	52,014	52,396	48,378	51,058	45,364	43,532	200,840	193,129	
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	42,853	44,758	51,707	50,412	48,107	51,891	48,814	48,753	49,142	45,399	47,786	42,420	40,761	189,730	181,922	
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	41,206	42,704	48,750	47,086	45,418	48,948	45,941	46,141	46,259	43,283	45,720	40,626	39,046	179,746	173,804	
551	Motor vehicle dealers, new & used	38,051	39,122	44,931	43,318	41,745	45,430	42,613	42,789	42,970	40,270	42,423	37,578	36,237	165,422	160,248	
553	Auto & home supply stores	2,672	2,494	2,947	2,997	3,056	3,197	3,146	3,261	3,254	2,979	3,272	2,944	2,771	11,110	11,207	
57	Furniture group stores	10,390	9,933	10,949	10,560	10,143	10,639	10,507	10,686	11,326	10,721	11,211	12,483	15,608	41,832	40,305	
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,227	5,000	5,629	5,564	5,209	5,489	5,382	5,590	5,793	5,443	5,822	6,347	6,720	21,420	20,077	
5712	Furniture stores	3,227	3,096	3,370	3,267	3,096	3,223	3,144	3,186	3,327	3,162	3,289	3,605	3,623	12,960	12,204	
5713	Floor covering stores	960	914	1,074	1,089	1,027	1,043	1,042	1,136	1,104	1,030	1,122	1,047	1,052	4,037	3,651	
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,398	4,179	4,500	4,265	4,140	4,323	4,299	4,306	4,669	4,474	4,604	5,205	7,263	17,342	16,957	
5722	Household appliance stores	740	692	777	763	742	792	788	790	832	760	797	882	1,031	2,972	2,816	
5731,34	Radio, TV and computer stores	3,658	3,487	3,723	3,502	3,398	3,531	3,511	3,516	3,837	3,714	3,807	4,323	6,232	14,370	14,141	
5941	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	1,464	1,460	1,770	1,880	1,794	1,876	2,010	1,951	2,125	1,710	1,564	1,736	2,889	6,574	6,286	
5942	Book stores	1,484	774	759	760	732	833	817	765	1,322	1,006	866	870	1,531	3,777	3,537	
5944	Jewelry stores	1,074	1,457	1,224	1,335	1,341	1,746	1,393	1,363	1,466	1,324	1,455	1,835	4,478	5,090	5,083	
	Nondurable goods, total	112,013	108,106	123,255	118,425	115,652	123,544	118,743	118,793	124,989	115,240	122,737	129,410	154,556	461,799	443,948	
53	General merchandise group stores	20,783	21,355	25,452	24,255	23,479	25,904	24,866	23,695	26,416	23,819	25,978	31,075	44,935	91,845	86,104	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	15,994	16,588	20,061	19,005	18,311	20,098	19,211	18,265	20,640	18,611	20,183	24,614	36,188	71,648	66,577	
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	16,229	16,831	20,378	19,318	18,689	20,475	19,551	18,582	21,016	18,938	20,539	25,069	36,701	72,756	67,918	
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	3,124	3,665	4,416	4,145	4,117	4,455	4,030	3,726	4,636	4,323	4,540	5,786	9,334	15,350	14,780	
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	10,420	10,611	12,814	12,198	11,506	12,760	12,391	11,785	12,804	11,471	12,533	14,969	20,781	46,043	41,993	
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	2,685	2,555	3,148	2,975	3,066	3,260	3,130	3,071	3,576	3,144	3,466	4,314	6,586	11,363	11,145	
533	Variety stores	545	621	740	645	641	705	651	646	699	616	710	776	1,218	2,551	2,300	
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	4,244	4,146	4,651	4,605	4,527	5,101	5,004	4,784	5,077	4,592	5,085	5,685	7,529	17,646	17,227	
54	Food group stores	35,132	32,328	36,404	34,625	34,031	36,348	35,310	36,289	36,716	34,096	35,498	35,880	38,008	138,489	135,173	
541	Grocery stores	33,317	30,501	34,323	32,691	32,177	34,399	33,420	34,411	34,803	32,314	33,584	33,924	35,463	130,832	128,136	
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	458	415	496	446	483	519	514	512	545	449	450	481	627	1,815	1,877	
546	Retail bakeries	578	605	655	640	514	580	551	535	556	545	617	606	657	2,478	1,996	
554	Gasoline service stations	12,529	11,723	12,970	12,948	12,887	14,039	13,642	13,629	13,795	12,724	13,264	12,807	12,990	50,170	48,077	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	6,957	7,202	9,348	8,575	9,026	9,435	8,941	8,616	10,366	9,052	9,569	10,777	15,130	32,082	31,782	
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings.	751	686	808	779	765	826	806	701	809	791	843	977	1,514	3,024	2,904	
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	2,030	2,136	2,699	2,557	2,732	2,967	2,765	2,453	2,764	2,638	2,805	3,048	4,406	9,422	9,492	
562	Women's ready to wear	1,695	1,808	2,345	2,211	2,393	2,595	2,405	2,090	2,368	2,285	2,418	2,596	3,666	8,059	8,133	
565	Family clothing stores	2,480	2,532	3,379	3,132	3,170	3,278	3,165	3,206	3,871	3,352	3,683	4,366	6,234	11,523	11,207	
566	Shoe stores	1,161	1,299	1,729	1,499	1,680	1,706	1,592	1,566	2,009	1,511	1,494	1,606	2,017	5,688	5,684	
58	Eating and drinking places	18,576	18,277	20,402	20,151	19,489	20,742	20,219	20,470	21,250	19,278	20,083	19,622	19,822	77,406	75,040	
5812	Eating places	17,543	17,295	19,322	19,104	18,443	19,654	19,156	19,381	20,120	18,234	18,993	18,535	18,721	73,264	70,877	
5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	9,840	9,721	10,742	10,472	10,171	10,693	10,327	10,583	11,198	10,100	10,454	10,352	10,182	40,775	39,300	
5812 pt.	Refreshment places	7,270	7,236	8,214	8,168	7,838	8,428	8,349	8,381	8,476	7,634	8,009	7,721	8,021	30,888	30,180	
5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	1,033	982	1,080	1,047	1,046	1,088	1,063	1,089	1,130	1,044	1,090	1,087	1,101	4,142	4,163	
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,827	7,565	8,281	7,820	7,329	7,651	7,164	7,381	7,526	7,114	7,715	7,613	9,602	31,493	28,916	
592	Liquor stores	1,702	1,620	1,854	1,818	1,772	1,927	1,927	2,002	2,032	1,757	1,837	1,970	2,525	6,994	6,873	
596	Nonstore retailers ²	5,150	4,996	5,835	5,792	5,181	5,111	4,726	4,802	4,906	5,268	6,220	6,920	7,951	21,773	20,288	
5961	Total mail order ³	3,804	3,432	4,215	4,226	3,645	3,582	3,296	3,440	3,508	3,731	4,491	5,223	6,203	15,677	14,538	
598	Fuel dealers	2,181	1,633	1,368	1,142	1,156	910	726	751	775	922	1,228	1,405	1,887	6,324	6,677	
53,56,57,594	GAF, total ⁴	44,565	44,884	52,549	50,171	49,134	53,126	51,297	50,048	56,095	50,464	53,897	63,380	92,927	192,169	183,002	
594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	6,435	6,394	6,800	6,781	6,486	7,148	6,983	7,051	7,987	6,872	7,139	9,045	17,254	26,410	24,811	

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business—Con.

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997				1996										Total 4 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr. ^P	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1997	1996	
	Adjusted⁵																
	Retail sales, total	210,233	213,022	212,342	210,440	202,496	204,060	202,789	203,291	203,036	204,713	206,277	205,789	206,894	846,037	802,980	
	Total (excl. automotive group)	159,190	160,483	160,484	159,766	154,039	154,627	154,121	154,457	154,027	154,874	156,163	156,269	156,850	639,923	606,582	
	Durable goods, total	85,344	87,786	87,042	85,857	81,603	83,131	82,394	82,531	82,487	83,091	83,871	83,485	83,785	346,029	325,815	
52	Building materials group stores . .	11,558	11,901	12,075	12,081	11,063	11,152	11,579	11,507	11,302	11,336	11,386	11,339	11,319	47,615	42,766	
521.3	Building materials, supply stores . .	8,753	9,091	9,286	9,409	8,318	8,563	8,673	8,728	8,587	8,597	8,601	8,627	8,558	36,539	32,339	
525	Hardware stores	1,327	1,295	1,274	1,284	1,282	1,265	1,275	1,264	1,244	1,244	1,279	1,266	1,299	5,180	5,019	
55 ex	Automotive group	51,043	52,539	51,858	50,674	48,457	49,433	48,668	48,834	49,009	49,839	50,114	49,520	50,044	206,114	196,398	
551.2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous																
6,7,9	automobile dealers	48,041	49,566	48,872	47,739	45,470	46,414	45,663	45,820	46,013	46,851	47,033	46,564	47,068	194,218	184,518	
553	Auto & home supply stores	3,002	2,973	2,986	2,935	2,987	3,019	3,005	3,014	2,996	2,988	3,081	2,956	2,976	11,896	11,880	
57	Furniture group stores	11,247	11,591	11,496	11,584	11,117	11,172	11,137	11,142	11,235	11,232	11,214	11,142	11,125	45,918	43,775	
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,788	5,889	5,864	5,919	5,530	5,533	5,548	5,568	5,576	5,554	5,620	5,632	5,657	23,460	21,757	
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,615	4,826	4,762	4,814	4,662	4,714	4,673	4,675	4,759	4,811	4,727	4,647	4,600	19,017	18,372	
	Nondurable goods, total	124,889	125,236	125,300	124,583	120,893	120,929	120,395	120,760	120,549	121,622	122,406	122,304	123,109	500,008	477,165	
53	General merchandise group stores . .	27,395	27,507	27,388	27,190	26,189	26,126	25,973	26,009	26,187	26,295	26,511	26,253	26,674	109,480	102,286	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) . .	21,497	21,599	21,548	21,378	20,482	20,404	20,243	20,249	20,415	20,565	20,722	20,461	21,064	86,022	79,699	
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹ . .	21,695	21,947	21,853	21,637	20,672	20,764	20,567	20,644	20,808	20,896	21,016	20,936	21,382	87,132	80,921	
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	4,814	4,861	4,810	4,753	4,673	4,626	4,585	4,566	4,622	4,658	4,676	4,581	4,760	19,238	18,367	
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	13,291	13,552	13,545	13,449	12,507	12,571	12,554	12,631	12,728	12,760	12,828	12,893	13,029	53,837	48,920	
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	3,590	3,534	3,498	3,435	3,492	3,567	3,428	3,447	3,458	3,478	3,512	3,462	3,593	14,057	13,634	
533	Variety stores	735	789	757	724	688	686	696	714	705	689	714	702	711	3,005	2,699	
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	5,163	5,119	5,083	5,088	5,019	5,036	5,034	5,046	5,067	5,041	5,075	5,090	4,899	20,453	19,888	
54	Food group stores	35,838	35,841	36,165	35,911	35,094	35,008	35,053	35,367	35,148	35,633	35,691	35,627	35,761	143,755	139,502	
541	Grocery stores	33,824	33,777	34,084	33,877	33,206	33,108	33,122	33,474	33,241	33,731	33,787	33,688	33,806	135,562	132,028	
554	Gasoline service stations	13,429	13,352	13,289	13,145	13,070	13,269	12,980	12,773	12,750	12,827	13,004	13,082	13,242	53,215	50,558	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,678	9,709	9,572	9,480	9,595	9,582	9,561	9,471	9,482	9,585	9,522	9,344	9,402	38,439	37,732	
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings. .	907	886	888	891	846	860	835	851	866	879	856	852	811	3,572	3,399	
562.3	Women's clothing specialty stores . .	2,851	2,814	2,740	2,712	2,837	2,842	2,880	2,741	2,731	2,792	2,774	2,726	2,768	11,117	11,112	
566	Shoe stores	1,601	1,700	1,620	1,583	1,645	1,634	1,611	1,626	1,602	1,553	1,573	1,555	1,584	6,504	6,410	
58	Eating and drinking places	20,346	20,467	20,361	20,232	19,646	19,642	19,460	19,607	19,549	19,651	19,845	20,084	20,002	81,406	78,275	
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,922	8,082	8,111	8,054	7,403	7,479	7,470	7,578	7,617	7,649	7,785	7,768	7,800	32,169	29,295	
592	Liquor stores	1,932	1,952	1,954	1,976	1,899	1,900	1,912	1,908	1,928	1,877	1,882	1,892	1,910	7,814	7,602	
5961	Total mail order ³	4,025	4,196	4,409	4,549	3,932	3,989	4,069	4,165	3,973	3,999	3,985	3,918	4,028	17,179	15,618	
53,56 57,594	GAF, total⁴	56,404	57,079	56,609	56,394	54,604	54,608	54,473	54,500	54,867	54,975	55,188	54,793	55,305	226,486	214,237	

^PPreliminary estimates (Appendix B, Table B-3 contains measures of revisions to preliminary estimates).¹Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.²Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail order.³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores). (See Appendix A.)⁵Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. (See Appendix C.)

Note: U.S. and group totals include data for kinds of business not shown. Measures of sampling variability are shown in Table B-1.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change			SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change		
		Apr. 1997 from		4 mos. 1997 from 4 mos. 1996			Apr. 1997 from		4 mos. 1997 from 4 mos. 1996
		Apr. 1996	Mar. 1997				Apr. 1996	Mar. 1997	
	Unadjusted				58	Eating and drinking places	+3.4	-1.2	+3.2
	Retail sales, total	+3.4	-2.2	+4.4	5812	Eating places	+3.6	-1.1	+3.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+3.1	-2.2	+4.6	5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	+3.0	-2.5	+3.8
	Durable goods, total	+4.8	+3	+5.1	5812 pt.	Refreshment places	+4.2	-6	+2.3
	Building materials group stores	+7.8	+16.1	+9.7	5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	+1	-3.1	-5
52	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	+10.1	+14.3	+10.1	591	Drug & proprietary stores	+6.7	-5.6	+8.9
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores . .	+11.7	+14.0	+11.3	592	Liquor stores	+2.6	-1.9	+1.8
521,3	Paint, glass, wallpaper stores*	+9.0	+15.3	+5.3	5943	Stationery stores*	+4.5	-6	+5.7
523	Hardware stores	-7	+17.1	+2.2	596	Nonstore retailers ²	+11.8	-7	+7.3
525					5961	Total mail order ³	+15.9	+3	+7.8
55 ex	Automotive group	+4.4	-2.3	+4.0	598	Fuel dealers	-1.2	-16.5	-5.3
554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	+4.8	-2.5	+4.3	5992	Florist shops*	-2.9	-2.2	+8.3
551,2,5	Motor vehicle dealers	+3.7	-3.4	+3.4	53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	+2.1	-4.5	+5.0
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.) . .	+3.8	-3.6	+3.2	594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	+4.5	-3	+6.4
551	Auto & home supply stores	-1.9	+1.7	-9		Adjusted⁵			
553						Retail sales, total	+3.9	-9	+5.4
57	Furniture group stores	+4.1	-3.6	+3.8		Total (excl. automotive group) . .	+3.7	-4	+5.5
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	+6.8	-1.2	+6.7		Durable goods, total	+5.2	-1.4	+6.2
5712	Furniture stores	+5.5	-3.1	+6.2	52	Building materials group stores	+9.2	.0	+11.3
5713	Floor covering stores	+6.0	+1.4	+10.6	521,3	Building materials, supply stores . . .	+13.1	+1.3	+13.0
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	+3.0	-5.2	+2.3	525	Hardware stores	+2	+8	+3.2
5722	Household appliance stores	+2.8	-1.8	+5.5	55 ex	Automotive group	+4.6	-2.3	+4.9
5731,34	Radio, TV and computer stores . . .	+3.1	-5.9	+1.6	554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	+5.0	-2.3	+5.3
5735,6	Music stores*	-7.9	-10.9	-6.1	551,2,5	Auto & home supply stores	-1.7	-1.7	+1
5941	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	+4.8	+6.2	+4.6	553	Furniture group stores	+4.2	+8	+4.9
5942	Book stores	+3.8	+1	+6.8	57	Furniture & home furn. stores	+7.0	+9	+7.8
5944	Jewelry stores	-4	+9.1	+1	571	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	+3.3	+1.1	+3.5
5946	Camera,photographic supply stores* . .	+8.3	+2.2	+9.3	5722,31,34	Nondurable goods, total	+3.1	-6	+4.8
5999 pt.	Optical goods stores*	+2.7	-8.0	+6.2	53	General merchandise group stores . .	+3.8	-7	+7.0
	Nondurable goods, total	+2.4	-3.9	+4.0	531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	+4.4	-8	+7.9
53	General merchandise group stores . .	+3.3	-4.7	+6.7	531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹ . . .	+4.7	-1.0	+7.7
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) . . .	+3.8	-5.3	+7.6	531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+1.7	-1.2	+4.7
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹ . .	+3.4	-5.2	+7.1	531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+7.5	-7	+10.1
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+7	-6.1	+3.9	531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	-1.6	-1.8	+3.1
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+6.0	-4.8	+9.6	533	Variety stores	+5.2	-4.4	+11.3
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	-3.0	-5.5	+2.0	539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	+1.4	+1	+2.8
533	Variety stores	+6	-12.8	+10.9	54	Food group stores	+2.3	-7	+3.0
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	+1.7	-1.0	+2.4	541	Grocery stores	+2.0	-6	+2.7
54	Food group stores	+1.7	-4.9	+2.5	554	Gasoline service stations	+6	-1.1	+5.3
541	Grocery stores	+1.6	-4.8	+2.1	56	Apparel & accessory stores	-1.2	-1.0	+1.9
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	-7.7	-10.1	-3.3	561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings. . .	+5.3	+3	+5.1
543	Fruit stores & vegetable markets* . . .	+1.8	+3.2	+5.3	562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores . . .	-4.4	-1.0	.0
544	Candy, nut, confectionery stores* . . .	-41.3	-48.0	+6	566	Shoe stores	-3.8	-2.3	+1.5
546	Retail bakeries	+24.5	-2.3	+24.1	58	Eating and drinking places	+3.0	-6	+4.0
554	Gasoline service stations	+5	-2	+4.4	591	Drug & proprietary stores	+8.8	-7	+9.8
56	Apparel & accessory stores	-5.0	-8.3	+9	592	Liquor stores	+4.1	+1.1	+2.8
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings. . .	+1.8	-3.6	+4.1	5961	Total mail order ³	+15.7	+3.2	+10.0
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores . . .	-6.4	-5.3	-7	53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	+3.3	-4	+5.7
562	Women's ready to wear stores	-7.6	-5.7	-9					
565	Family clothing stores	-1.2	-7.3	+2.8					
566	Shoe stores	-10.8	-13.3	+1					

*See Appendix A, Percent Change.

¹Based on data for leased departments operated within department stores.²Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail order.³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores). (See Appendix A.)⁵Based on data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not price changes.

Note: Measures of sampling variability for unadjusted data are shown in Table B-1.

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business: 1996

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail sales, total	197,714	201,085	201,685	202,496	204,060	202,789	203,291	203,036	204,713	206,277	205,789	206,894
	Total (excl. automotive group)	149,641	151,137	151,765	154,039	154,627	154,121	154,457	154,027	154,874	156,163	156,269	156,850
	Durable goods, total	79,640	81,931	82,641	81,603	83,131	82,394	82,531	82,487	83,091	83,871	83,485	83,785
52	Building materials group stores	10,440	10,580	10,683	11,063	11,152	11,579	11,507	11,302	11,336	11,386	11,339	11,319
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	7,890	7,994	8,137	8,318	8,563	8,673	8,728	8,587	8,597	8,601	8,627	8,558
525	Hardware stores	1,235	1,263	1,239	1,282	1,265	1,275	1,264	1,244	1,244	1,279	1,266	1,299
55 ex													
554	Automotive group	48,073	49,948	49,920	48,457	49,433	48,668	48,834	49,009	49,839	50,114	49,520	50,044
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous												
6,7,9	automobile dealers	45,134	46,979	46,935	45,470	46,414	45,663	45,820	46,013	46,851	47,033	46,564	47,068
553	Auto & home supply stores	2,939	2,969	2,985	2,987	3,019	3,005	3,014	2,996	2,988	3,081	2,956	2,976
57	Furniture group stores	10,709	10,821	11,128	11,117	11,172	11,137	11,142	11,235	11,232	11,214	11,142	11,125
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,270	5,387	5,570	5,530	5,533	5,548	5,568	5,576	5,554	5,620	5,632	5,657
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and												
	computer stores	4,549	4,524	4,637	4,662	4,714	4,673	4,675	4,759	4,811	4,727	4,647	4,600
	Nondurable goods, total	118,074	119,154	119,044	120,893	120,929	120,395	120,760	120,549	121,622	122,406	122,304	123,109
53	General merchandise group stores	25,225	25,588	25,284	26,189	26,126	25,973	26,009	26,187	26,295	26,511	26,253	26,674
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	19,681	19,945	19,591	20,482	20,404	20,243	20,249	20,415	20,565	20,722	20,461	21,064
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ²	19,870	20,277	20,102	20,672	20,764	20,567	20,644	20,808	20,896	21,016	20,936	21,382
531 pt.	Conventional department stores												
	(including, leased depts.) ²	4,449	4,641	4,604	4,673	4,626	4,585	4,566	4,622	4,658	4,676	4,581	4,760
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including,												
	leased depts.) ²	12,092	12,221	12,100	12,507	12,571	12,554	12,631	12,728	12,760	12,828	12,893	13,029
531 pt.	National chain department stores												
	(including, leased depts.) ²	3,329	3,415	3,398	3,492	3,567	3,428	3,447	3,458	3,478	3,512	3,462	3,593
533	Variety stores	658	673	680	688	686	696	714	705	689	714	702	711
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise												
	stores	4,886	4,970	5,013	5,019	5,036	5,034	5,046	5,067	5,041	5,075	5,090	4,899
54	Food group stores	34,882	34,703	34,823	35,094	35,008	35,053	35,367	35,148	35,633	35,691	35,627	35,761
541	Grocery stores	33,020	32,853	32,949	33,206	33,108	33,122	33,474	33,241	33,731	33,787	33,688	33,806
554	Gasoline service stations	12,353	12,388	12,747	13,070	13,269	12,980	12,773	12,750	12,827	13,004	13,082	13,242
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,230	9,585	9,322	9,595	9,582	9,561	9,471	9,482	9,585	9,522	9,344	9,402
561	Mens & boys' clothing, furnishings.	843	864	846	846	860	835	851	866	879	856	852	811
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	2,732	2,857	2,686	2,837	2,842	2,880	2,741	2,731	2,792	2,774	2,726	2,768
566	Shoe stores	1,577	1,600	1,588	1,645	1,634	1,611	1,626	1,602	1,553	1,573	1,555	1,584
58	Eating and drinking places	19,360	19,662	19,607	19,646	19,642	19,460	19,607	19,549	19,651	19,845	20,084	20,002
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,184	7,328	7,380	7,403	7,479	7,470	7,578	7,617	7,649	7,785	7,768	7,800
592	Liquor stores	1,912	1,889	1,902	1,899	1,900	1,912	1,908	1,928	1,877	1,882	1,892	1,910
5961	Total mail order ³	3,885	3,981	3,820	3,932	3,989	4,069	4,165	3,973	3,999	3,985	3,918	4,028
53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	52,677	53,512	53,444	54,604	54,608	54,473	54,500	54,867	54,975	55,188	54,793	55,305

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. (See Appendix C.)

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the Monthly Retail Trade Report.

⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. (See Appendix A.)

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown.

Table 4. Estimated End-of-Month Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997				1996										Percent change Apr. 1997 from	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr. ^P	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Apr. 1996	Mar. 1997	
	Unadjusted																
	Retail Inventories, total	305,201	311,146	313,922	317,779	304,538	303,736	300,383	300,137	303,023	313,263	333,919	338,080	309,184	+4.3	+1.2	
	Total (excl. automotive group)	215,489	218,891	221,429	224,410	217,355	216,410	214,066	218,851	222,555	230,960	247,489	249,835	218,332	+3.2	+1.3	
	Durable goods, total	164,287	168,340	169,699	171,805	162,959	163,110	161,280	157,004	157,087	161,115	171,129	173,277	166,527	+5.4	+1.2	
52	Building materials group stores	21,738	22,383	23,566	24,056	22,399	22,478	22,365	22,045	21,550	21,547	21,882	21,835	21,776	+7.4	+2.1	
55 ex 554	Automotive group	89,712	92,255	92,493	93,369	87,183	87,326	86,317	81,286	80,468	82,303	86,430	88,245	90,852	+7.1	+9	
57	Furniture group stores	22,132	21,853	21,826	21,735	23,013	22,929	22,438	22,582	23,125	24,173	26,261	26,157	22,525	-5.6	-4	
	Nondurable goods, total	140,914	142,806	144,223	145,974	141,579	140,626	139,103	143,133	145,936	152,148	162,790	164,803	142,657	+3.1	+1.2	
53	General merchandise group stores . .	53,533	55,108	56,051	57,133	56,541	56,156	55,332	56,792	58,718	62,677	68,354	69,654	54,596	+1.0	+1.9	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) .	43,489	45,003	46,004	46,917	45,488	45,158	44,452	45,599	47,359	50,463	55,131	56,509	44,222	+3.1	+2.0	
54	Food group stores	28,825	28,257	28,535	28,307	27,519	27,382	27,262	27,471	27,374	27,932	29,284	30,002	29,435	+2.9	-8	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	21,418	22,683	23,199	23,957	22,875	22,341	22,130	23,449	24,246	24,946	26,801	27,240	21,786	+4.7	+3.3	
	Adjusted¹																
	Retail Inventories, total	313,980	315,938	315,427	317,759	304,696	305,214	305,677	309,786	311,112	312,969	315,281	313,490	314,183	+4.3	+7	
	Total (excl. automotive group)	226,501	227,566	226,843	228,085	220,963	220,991	220,811	223,436	223,229	223,850	225,918	225,795	226,132	+3.2	+5	
	Durable goods, total	165,441	167,380	167,444	168,572	160,065	160,631	161,138	163,433	164,862	166,530	168,146	165,865	165,997	+5.3	+7	
52	Building materials group stores	22,433	22,564	22,835	23,042	21,455	21,531	21,926	22,045	21,834	22,077	22,170	22,281	22,542	+7.4	+9	
55 ex 554	Automotive group	87,479	88,372	88,584	89,674	83,733	84,223	84,866	86,350	87,883	89,119	89,363	87,695	88,051	+7.1	+1.2	
57	Furniture group stores	22,864	22,883	22,712	22,477	23,798	23,785	23,349	23,696	23,549	23,423	23,680	22,965	22,413	-5.6	-1.0	
	Nondurable goods, total	148,539	148,558	147,983	149,187	144,631	144,583	144,539	146,353	146,250	146,439	147,135	147,625	148,186	+3.2	+8	
53	General merchandise group stores . .	58,315	58,388	58,056	58,723	58,061	57,940	58,247	58,877	59,167	59,164	59,185	59,208	58,823	+1.1	+1.1	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) .	47,374	47,522	47,623	48,169	46,654	46,555	46,890	47,302	47,693	47,652	47,815	48,011	47,704	+3.2	+1.1	
54	Food group stores	28,690	28,580	28,667	28,597	27,799	27,814	27,625	27,964	28,085	28,182	28,482	28,677	28,701	+2.9	-2	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	24,038	24,054	23,794	24,297	23,200	23,175	23,295	23,379	23,403	23,336	23,592	23,937	23,914	+4.7	+2.1	

^PPreliminary estimates (Appendix B, Table B-4 contains measures of revisions to preliminary estimates).¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. (See Appendix C.)

Note: U.S. and group totals include data for kinds of business not shown. Measures of sampling variability are shown in Table B-2.

Table 5. Inventories/Sales Ratios

SIC code	Kind of business	1997				1996									
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr. ^P	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
	Unadjusted														
	Retail trade, total	1.64	1.70	1.50	1.55	1.53	1.42	1.47	1.47	1.43	1.60	1.61	1.61	1.26	
	Total (excl. automotive group) . . .	1.53	1.61	1.43	1.48	1.47	1.36	1.40	1.43	1.39	1.57	1.58	1.52	1.09	
	Durable goods, total	2.22	2.23	1.96	1.98	1.96	1.81	1.88	1.83	1.80	2.00	2.02	2.14	1.85	
52	Building materials group stores	2.45	2.52	2.13	1.87	1.88	1.68	1.73	1.73	1.75	1.85	1.78	2.00	2.10	
55 ex	Automotive group	1.97	1.95	1.69	1.75	1.70	1.59	1.66	1.56	1.54	1.70	1.69	1.95	2.09	
554	Furniture group stores	2.13	2.20	1.99	2.06	2.27	2.16	2.14	2.11	2.04	2.25	2.34	2.10	1.44	
57	Nondurable goods, total	1.26	1.32	1.17	1.23	1.22	1.14	1.17	1.20	1.17	1.32	1.33	1.27	.92	
53	General merchandise group stores	2.58	2.58	2.20	2.36	2.41	2.17	2.23	2.40	2.22	2.63	2.63	2.24	1.21	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.72	2.71	2.29	2.47	2.48	2.25	2.31	2.50	2.29	2.71	2.73	2.30	1.22	
54	Food group stores82	.87	.78	.82	.81	.75	.77	.76	.75	.82	.82	.84	.77	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	3.08	3.15	2.48	2.79	2.53	2.37	2.48	2.72	2.34	2.76	2.80	2.53	1.44	
	Adjusted¹														
	Retail trade, total	1.49	1.48	1.49	1.51	1.50	1.50	1.51	1.52	1.53	1.53	1.53	1.52	1.52	
	Total (excl. automotive group) . . .	1.42	1.42	1.41	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.44	1.44	
	Durable goods, total	1.94	1.91	1.92	1.96	1.96	1.93	1.96	1.98	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.99	1.98	
52	Building materials group stores	1.94	1.90	1.89	1.91	1.94	1.93	1.89	1.92	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.96	1.99	
55 ex	Automotive group	1.71	1.68	1.71	1.77	1.73	1.70	1.74	1.77	1.79	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.76	
554	Furniture group stores	2.03	1.97	1.98	1.94	2.14	2.13	2.10	2.13	2.10	2.09	2.11	2.06	2.01	
57	Nondurable goods, total	1.19	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.20	
53	General merchandise group stores	2.13	2.12	2.12	2.16	2.22	2.22	2.24	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.23	2.26	2.21	
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.20	2.20	2.21	2.25	2.28	2.28	2.32	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.31	2.35	2.26	
54	Food group stores80	.80	.79	.80	.79	.79	.79	.79	.80	.79	.80	.80	.80	
56	Apparel & accessory stores	2.48	2.48	2.49	2.56	2.42	2.42	2.44	2.47	2.47	2.43	2.48	2.56	2.54	

^PPreliminary estimates¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes.

Table 6. Estimated End-of-Month Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business: 1996

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail Inventories, total	305,094	305,336	303,737	304,696	305,214	305,677	309,786	311,112	312,969	315,281	313,490	314,183
	Total (excl. automotive group)	218,642	219,292	219,797	220,963	220,991	220,811	223,436	223,229	223,850	225,918	225,795	226,132
	Durable goods, total	160,493	160,667	159,306	160,065	160,631	161,138	163,433	164,862	166,530	168,146	165,865	165,997
	Building materials group stores	21,089	21,176	21,394	21,455	21,531	21,926	22,045	21,834	22,077	22,170	22,281	22,542
52	Automotive group	86,452	86,044	83,940	83,733	84,223	84,866	86,350	87,883	89,119	89,363	87,695	88,051
55 ex	Furniture group stores	22,976	23,391	23,376	23,798	23,785	23,349	23,696	23,549	23,423	23,680	22,965	22,413
554													
57	Nondurable goods, total	144,601	144,669	144,431	144,631	144,583	144,539	146,353	146,250	146,439	147,135	147,625	148,186
53	General merchandise group stores	58,256	57,931	57,932	58,061	57,940	58,247	58,877	59,167	59,164	59,185	59,208	58,823
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	46,333	46,323	46,523	46,654	46,555	46,890	47,302	47,693	47,652	47,815	48,011	47,704
54	Food group stores	27,440	27,536	27,569	27,799	27,814	27,625	27,964	28,085	28,182	28,482	28,677	28,701
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,906	23,832	23,907	23,200	23,175	23,295	23,379	23,403	23,336	23,592	23,937	23,914

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. (See Appendix C.)

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown.

Table 7. Inventories/Sales Ratios by Kinds of Business: 1996

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail trade, total	1.54	1.52	1.51	1.50	1.50	1.51	1.52	1.53	1.53	1.53	1.52	1.52
	Total (excl. automotive group)	1.46	1.45	1.45	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.44	1.44
	Durable goods, total	2.02	1.96	1.93	1.96	1.93	1.96	1.98	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.99	1.98
	Building materials group stores	2.02	2.00	2.00	1.94	1.93	1.89	1.92	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.96	1.99
52	Automotive group	1.80	1.72	1.68	1.73	1.70	1.74	1.77	1.79	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.76
55 ex	Furniture group stores	2.15	2.16	2.10	2.14	2.13	2.10	2.13	2.10	2.09	2.11	2.06	2.01
554													
57	Nondurable goods, total	1.22	1.21	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.21	1.20	1.20	1.21	1.20
53	General merchandise group stores	2.31	2.26	2.29	2.22	2.22	2.24	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.23	2.26	2.21
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.35	2.32	2.37	2.28	2.28	2.32	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.31	2.35	2.26
54	Food group stores	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.80	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.80
56	Apparel & accessory stores	2.59	2.49	2.56	2.42	2.42	2.44	2.47	2.47	2.43	2.48	2.56	2.54

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes.

Appendix A.

Explanatory Material

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of the Census produces the *Monthly Retail Trade Report* to provide national estimates of—

- Sales and
- End-of-month inventories

of retail establishments by kind-of-business.

The sales and inventory estimates in this report are developed from a probability sample that represents employer firms of all sizes and kinds of business in retail trade throughout the nation. The use of a probability sample allows the precision of the estimates to be evaluated in terms of their sampling variability.

SALES AND INVENTORIES SAMPLE DESIGN

Sales Sample

A new sample will be used to compute estimates beginning with the April 1997 data month. This section describes the design and selection procedures for the new sample. For a description of the prior sample see the reference given at the end of this Introduction.

The sampling frame contains two types of sampling units—firms (companies) and Employer Identification Numbers (EINs). The EIN is issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and is primarily used by the firm as an identifier to report social security payments for their employees under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). Both sampling units represent clusters of one or more establishments. All of the establishments used to create these sampling units were extracted from the Census Bureau's Standard Statistical Establishment List (SSEL) as updated to December 31, 1994. The SSEL is a multirelational database that contains a record for each known business location (establishment) connected with employer firms.

To create the sampling frame, we extracted the records for all establishments that have a Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) that falls in the Retail Trade area. For these establishments, we also extract sales (or receipts), payroll, employment, name and address information, and information that identifies it with a unique firm (company).

There is a simple structure that connects firms with establishments via the EIN. Essentially a firm is a cluster of EINs and EINs are clusters of establishments. Each firm is associated with at least one EIN and only one firm can use a given EIN. However, one firm may use several EINs. Similarly there is a one to many relationship between EINs and establishments. Each EIN can be associated with many establishments but each establishment is associated with only one EIN. We classify firms as one of the following three types:

- Firms with a single establishment, called single unit EINs.
- Firms with more than one establishment but only one EIN, called multiunit EINs.
- Firms with more than one establishment and more than one EIN.

The primary stratification of the frame is by kind of business group. We further stratify the sampling units within kind-of-business groups (substratified) by a measure of size related to their sales. To reduce the variance of the estimates, the largest sampling units are selected “with certainty.” This means they are sure to be selected and will represent only themselves (i.e., have a selection probability of 1 and a sampling weight of 1). Thus, within each kind of business, the most important substratum boundary is the one that divides the certainty units from the noncertainty units—the certainty cutoff. We based these values on a statistical analysis of the 1992 Census of Retail Trade. Accordingly, these cutoffs are on a 1992 sales basis. We also used this analysis to optimally allocate the sample among the kinds-of-business groups. The allocation is optimal in the sense that it is the minimum sample size that achieves specified sampling variability objectives for sales estimates for different kind-of-business groups.

The first step in the sample selection identified certainty firms. If a firm had total retail sales for 1994 (adjusted to a 1992 basis) greater than the certainty cutoff for its major kind of business, the firm was selected into the sample with certainty. In this case, the firm is considered the sampling unit. This has important consequences when the firm adds establishments. If a firm was selected with certainty and had more than one establishment at the time of sampling, any new establishments that the firm acquires, even if under new or different EINs, are included in the sample with certainty. If a firm was selected with certainty and was

a single unit EIN only future establishments associated with that EIN are included with certainty; any new EINs that might later be associated with that firm are subjected to sampling as births (see below).

All firms not selected with certainty were subjected to sampling on an EIN basis. If a firm had more than one EIN, each of its EINs was treated as a separate sampling unit. To be eligible for the initial sampling, an EIN had to have had payroll in 1994. The EINs were then stratified according to their major kinds of business and their estimated sales (on a 1992 basis). Within each noncertainty stratum, a simple random sample of EINs was selected. We then assigned the selected cases to one of two groups. One group will be canvassed for both the monthly and annual surveys, the other for the annual only. The sampling rates for the EINs selected in the sample varied between 1 in 1 and 1 in 969.

Periodically, we update the sample to represent EINs issued since the last sample selection. For all EIN "births," a two-phase selection procedure is used. EIN births are new EINs recently assigned by the IRS, on the latest available IRS mailing list for FICA taxpayers, and assigned a kind-of-business classification (if possible) by the Social Security Administration (SSA). In the first phase, births are stratified by kind of business and size (expected employment or quarterly payroll). A relatively large sample is drawn and canvassed to obtain a more reliable measure of size, consisting of sales in 2 recent months, and a more detailed kind-of-business code, if needed.

Using this more reliable information, the selected births from the first phase are subjected to probability-proportional-to-size sampling with overall probabilities equivalent to those used in drawing the initial sample from the 1994 SSEL. Because of the lag in reporting births to the IRS, and the time needed to accomplish the two-phase birth-selection procedure, births are added to the sample approximately 9 months after they begin operation. The ongoing birth-selection procedure is carried out quarterly and one-third of these newly selected birth EINs are added into the survey over each of the next 3 months.

Because births are not represented in the sample until they go through the selection procedure described above, an interim procedure is required to account for births during the period between the onset of activity and the time of birth selection. This consists of imputing data for all selected cases that go out of business but are still on the IRS mailing list.

To be eligible for the sample canvass and tabulation in a given month, a noncertainty retail EIN must meet both of the following requirements:

- It must be on the latest available IRS mailing list for FICA taxpayers from the previous quarter.
- It must have been selected from either the SSEL or the file of employer births.

EINs selected into the sample with certainty are not dropped from canvass and tabulation if they are no longer on the IRS mailing list. Rather, the business that used the EIN is contacted, and if a successor EIN is found, it is added to the survey. This is a more stringent quality control used for these larger businesses.

The list sample is updated quarterly to account for business births and deaths and represents approximately 96 percent of retail sales. Canvass of this component is primarily by mail. Recent EIN births and nonemployers, not accounted for by the list sample, represent the balance of retail sales. The benchmarking procedure adds this component to the list sample estimates to yield the total retail estimates.

Inventory Sample

The list sample portion of the inventory is a subsample of the EINs and companies included in the monthly retail sales survey. Benchmarking also accounted for the inventories of recent EIN births and nonemployers.

Studies similar to those performed for the sales sample were conducted prior to selecting the inventory sample. Those studies determined the stratification (based on sales from the *1992 Census of Retail Trade*), allocation (based on inventory from the *1992 Annual Retail Trade Survey*), and certainty cutoffs required to meet desired inventory sampling variability constraints for various kind-of-business groups.

The initial inventory list sample was selected from the initial sales list sample by the first stratifying EINs and companies by kind-of-business groups and estimated sales (on a 1992 basis). To meet reliability constraints, the required number of cases in each size stratum were then selected on a probability-proportional-to-size basis. Some companies and EINs because of their relatively large impact on the inventory estimates, were selected with certainty in order to reduce the sampling variability associated with the estimates.

After the initial inventory sample selection, all births selected into the sales sample were subjected to probability-proportional-to-size sampling with overall probabilities equivalent to those used in drawing the initial inventory sample.

MONTHLY ESTIMATION PROCEDURES

All sampling units selected with certainty (weight equal to 1.0) are canvassed each month to obtain current month data. As noted previously, two samples of noncertainty (weight greater than 1.0) EINs were selected. In the previous sample three such samples were selected, and noncertainty EINs were canvassed on a rotating basis to collect current and previous month data. In a given month, estimates from two rotating panels were combined using a composite estimation procedure. Although this produced more reliable estimates of monthly level than the use of a

single sample, it contributed to larger revisions between months. For this reason, and to produce month-to-month trend estimates from the same group of firms, we introduced a “fixed panel” design. Each month, all certainty sampling units and half the noncertainty sampling units are asked to report their current month data. (The other half of the noncertainty units are canvassed for the annual survey only.) The estimates are based on the summation of weighted data, where the weights are the inverses of the probabilities of selection. Estimates for the previous month (“Final” estimates) may differ from the earlier preliminary estimates because of births, deaths, late reports, and revised reports.

Percent Change

Month-to-month and year-to-year comparisons for sales and inventory shown in this report are based on the total dollar volume of receipts or value of inventory for each period being compared. These trends thus include the effect of stores starting operation or ceasing operation and are not limited to “identical stores,” i.e., those in operation in both of the periods being compared.

The percent changes shown in Table 2 for sales for kinds of business not marked with an asterisk are derived directly from the dollar volume estimates in Table 1. The sampling variability of dollar estimates for those kinds of business with an asterisk is relatively large. Therefore, such estimates are not published in Table 1 for sales. However, the sampling variability of the percent changes derived from such estimates are relatively small and are, therefore, published in Table 2 for sales.

Unpublished Data

Selected additional data, such as dollar volume estimates for some kinds of business not separately shown in this report, are produced as a byproduct of the regularly published statistics. These additional data have not been included in this publication because of high imputation or sampling variability (relative to the changes from month to month or between other periods) that might make them potentially misleading. For a fee, the Bureau of the Census will release such figures for individual use, though not for publication. It should be noted that some unpublished figures can be derived directly from this report by subtracting published data from their respective totals. However, the figures obtained by such subtraction would be subject to the high imputation rates or high sampling variability described previously for unpublished kinds of business.

Benchmarking

Statistics in this publication reflect a benchmarking process that revised the previously published monthly estimates of sales and end-of-month inventories for 1993 through 1996. The revised unadjusted sales and inventory estimates reflect the results derived from the *1995 Annual Retail Trade Survey*.

We revised the monthly sales estimates for January 1993 through December 1996 in a manner which—

- Linked the revised estimates to the previously published December 1992 estimates.
- Equated the sum of the 12 monthly estimates to the 1993, 1994, and 1995 annual estimates.
- Minimized differences between the month-to-month trends of the originally tabulated estimates and the revised estimates.

We benchmarked the inventories estimates in a manner similar to the sales estimates—

- We linked the revised estimates to the previously published December 1992 estimates.
- We equated the December 1993 through 1995 estimates to the end-of-year estimates from the annual survey.
- We minimized difference between the month-to-month trends of the originally tabulated estimates and the revised estimates.

The 1996 monthly sales and inventories estimates were revised to be compatible with the 1995 estimates. We multiplied originally tabulated 1996 monthly estimates by the ratios of the December 1995 (originally tabulated) estimates. These ratios are called “carry-forward” factors. We will use the same carry-forward factors to modify the estimates of sales and inventories each month in 1997. These 1997 estimates should, therefore, be compatible with the revised 1993 through 1996 estimates.

We benchmarked specific detailed kind-of-business estimates for sales and inventories and added appropriate estimates to derive the summary totals. This process assured additivity.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at retail and wholesale by establishments primarily engaged in retail trade; amounts received from customers for layaway purchases; receipts from rental or leasing of vehicles, equipment, instruments, tools, etc; receipts for delivery, installation, maintenance, repair, alteration, storage, and other services; and receipts from gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer or wholesaler and passed along to the retailer. Sales are net after deduction for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Trade-in allowances and manufacturers’ rebates are not deducted from total sales, however, rebates offered by the retailer

are deducted. Total sales do not include commissions from vending machine operators or nonoperating income from such sources as investments and rental or sales of real estate.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

The sales figures represent total sales and receipts of all establishments primarily engaged in retail trade. They do not include sales at retail by manufacturers, wholesalers, service establishments, and others whose primary activity is other than retail trade.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks of merchandise, valued at cost, on hand for sale by retail establishments at the end of the month. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firms. However, the estimates provided are on a non-LIFO basis. Inventories are shown for retail stores and warehouses combined. Only those warehouses which maintain supplies of merchandise primarily intended for distribution to retail stores within the organization are included. Inventories exclude the value of fixtures, furnishings, equipment, and supplies used in store and warehouse operations and not held for resale.

Inventories-sales ratios. The inventories-sales ratios indicate the relationship of end-of-month inventories to sales during the month. The ratios shown are derived by dividing the inventories estimates by the corresponding sales estimates. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from one kind of business to another.

Kind-of-business classifications. Retail trade, defined as major groups 52 through 59 of the SIC Manual, includes establishments engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of the goods. Exceptions to this general rule are made necessary by trade practices. For example, lumber yards and paint, glass, and wallpaper stores are included in retail trade if they sell to the general public, even if a higher proportion of their sales is made to contractors. Also, establishments engaged in selling products such as typewriters, stationery, or gasoline to the

general public are classified in retail trade, even though such products may not be used for personal or household consumption. However, even within these areas of exception to the general rule, establishments that sell exclusively to business establishments, institutional and industrial users, or contractors are classified in wholesale trade.

Additional characteristics of retail trade establishments are that they usually operate at fixed places of business; they are engaged in activities to attract the general public to buy; they buy or receive merchandise as well as sell; they may process their products, but such processing is incidental or subordinate to selling; and they are considered as retail in the trade. Not all of these characteristics need be present, and some are modified by trade practice.

Kind-of-business classifications are not interchangeable with commodity classifications. Most businesses sell several kinds of commodities. The kind-of-business code assigned generally reflects the individual commodity, the commodity group which is the primary source of the establishment's receipts, or some mixture of commodities which characterizes the establishment's business. Classification of establishments by kind of business generally does not make it possible to determine either the number of establishments handling a particular commodity or the sales of that commodity. For example, the food group classification excludes stores selling food if the sale of food is not the primary source of receipts; moreover, even though stores are classified as food stores, some of their receipts may be derived from the sales of nonfood products.

GAF. GAF includes the following: General merchandise group stores (SIC 53); apparel and accessory stores (SIC 56); furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores (SIC 57); and miscellaneous shopping goods stores (SIC 594). GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

A description of each kind of business included in the accompanying statistical data is shown in Appendix D.

REFERENCE

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Business Reports, *Combined Annual and Revised Monthly Retail Trade, January 1986 Through January 1995*, Washington, DC 1996.

Appendix B.

Reliability of Data

An estimate based on a sample survey will differ from the population value because of sampling variability and nonsampling error. Sampling variability occurs because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the reporting, collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling variability and nonsampling errors.

Measures of Sampling Variability

The particular sample used in these surveys is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. Estimates derived from the different samples would differ from each other. The average of these estimates would be close to the estimate derived from a complete enumeration of the population. This assumes that a complete enumeration has the same nonsampling error as the sample survey. For sales and inventories, the average of the estimates differs from a complete census because of the composite estimation technique. Disregarding this difference, the standard error of the estimate is a measure of the variability among the estimates from all possible samples of the same size and design and, thus is a measure of the precision with which an estimate from a particular sample approximates the results of a complete enumeration.

The coefficient of variation (expressed as a percent) is the standard error of the estimate times 100 divided by the value being estimated. Note that the coefficients of variation are estimates derived from the sample and are also subject to sampling variability. Tables B-1 and B-2 give the estimates of coefficients of variation in percent for recent monthly dollar-volume sales and inventory estimates prepared by the Bureau of the Census and shown in this report.

The coefficients of variation presented in the tables permit certain confidence statements about the sample estimates. As noted before, the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about 2 out of 3 (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability tables. In about 9 out of 10 (90 percent) of these samples, the estimates would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than 1.65 times the percentage shown. In about 19 out of 20 (95

percent) of these samples, the estimates would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentage shown.

To illustrate the computations involved in the above confidence statements, as related to dollar volume sales estimates, assume that an estimate of sales published in Table 1 is \$10,750 million for a particular month and that the median coefficient of variation for this estimate, as given in Table B-1, is 1.8 percent, or 0.018. Multiplying \$10,750 million by 0.018 yields 194 million. Therefore, a 67-percent confidence interval is \$10,556 million to \$10,944 million (\$10,750 million plus or minus \$194 million). If corresponding confidence intervals were constructed for all possible samples of the same size and design, approximately 2 out of 3 (67 percent) of these intervals would contain the figure obtained from a complete enumeration. Typical practice is to construct 90- or 95-percent confidence intervals. Continuing with the illustration, a 90-percent confidence interval using $1.65 \times 0.018 \times 10,750$ million to yield 320 million). A 95-percent confidence interval is \$10,362 million to \$11,138 million (\$10,750 million plus or minus \$388 million).

All comparisons appearing on the front page of this publication and for which measures of sampling variability are available are accompanied by an indication of the 90-percent confidence interval. Thus, a statement such as “+ .8 (+ or -1.3)” indicates a 90-percent confidence interval from -0.5 to + 2.1. If the confidence interval contains zero, it is uncertain whether there is an increase or decrease.

Nonsampling Errors

As calculated for this report, the coefficient of variation measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimates and the true value being estimated. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources: (1) inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, (2) response errors, (3) definitional difficulties, (4) differences in the interpretation of questions, (5) mistakes in recording or coding the data obtained, and (6) other errors of collection, response, coverage, and estimation of missing data. These non-sampling errors also occur in complete censuses. Although no direct measures of the biases have been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and

tabulation of the data in an effort to minimize their influence. Coverage error has an effect on the accuracy of estimates for this survey to the extent that the administrative records system, which forms the basis of our survey universe frame, does not contain all legal businesses.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed sales amount to about 23 percent of the national sales estimates.

Table B-1. **Estimated Coefficients of Variation in Percent for Retail Sales by Kinds of Business**

[Based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, or trading-day differences]

SIC code	Kind of business	Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of two consecutive months ¹		Ratio to same month a year ago ²
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Median
	Retail sales, total	0.8-1.0	0.9	0.8-0.9	0.9	0.2-0.5	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.9-1.1	1.0	0.9-1.0	1.0	0.1-0.4	0.2	0.4
	Durable goods, total	1.0-1.2	1.1	1.1-1.2	1.1	0.5-0.8	0.6	0.9
52	Building materials group stores	2.7-3.7	3.2	3.0-3.5	3.2	0.8-1.4	1.0	1.8
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	3.3-4.2	3.7	3.3-4.0	3.6	0.5-1.2	0.6	1.3
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	3.3-4.3	3.6	3.3-4.0	3.6	0.6-1.3	0.7	1.4
523	Paint, glass, wallpaper stores*	4.5-6.3	5.5	4.1-5.8	5.0	1.2-2.0	1.4	3.7
525	Hardware stores	4.2-5.8	5.1	4.4-5.7	4.8	1.1-2.1	1.4	2.4
55 ex	Automotive group	1.5-2.0	1.7	1.5-1.8	1.6	0.6-1.2	0.9	1.3
554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile							
551,2,5 6,7,9	dealers	1.7-2.2	2.0	1.7-2.1	1.9	0.7-1.4	0.9	1.4
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	1.4-2.1	1.7	1.4-2.0	1.6	0.7-1.3	1.0	1.5
551	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.)	1.4-2.1	1.7	1.5-2.0	1.6	0.7-1.3	0.9	1.6
553	Auto & home supply stores	3.7-4.6	4.0	3.6-4.2	3.9	0.8-1.1	0.9	2.9
57	Furniture group stores	1.4-2.1	1.8	1.3-1.9	1.7	0.5-1.3	0.6	1.1
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	3.4-4.6	3.5	3.0-4.2	3.5	0.9-2.9	1.1	1.4
5712	Furniture stores	4.1-5.7	4.6	3.9-5.2	4.6	0.5-1.8	1.1	1.9
5713	Floor covering stores	5.6-8.3	6.9	5.9-8.0	6.6	1.8-4.5	2.0	4.8
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer							
5722	stores	1.2-2.3	2.1	1.3-2.2	2.0	0.4-1.2	0.7	1.2
5731,34	Household appliance stores	3.1-3.9	3.8	3.0-4.2	3.7	0.6-1.6	1.1	2.6
5735,36	Radio, TV and computer stores	1.6-2.6	2.5	1.6-2.6	2.4	0.4-1.4	0.8	1.4
5941	Music stores*	7.3-9.9	8.7	7.4-9.6	8.5	0.8-2.7	1.6	3.1
5942	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	3.3-6.6	5.3	3.6-5.8	5.4	1.4-3.9	2.5	2.8
5942	Book stores	3.8-5.8	4.8	3.5-5.4	4.6	0.9-4.6	1.4	3.4
5944	Jewelry stores	4.3-6.3	4.8	4.3-6.1	4.6	1.2-4.9	1.7	3.6
5946	Camera,photographic supply stores*	6.1-8.1	7.1	6.1-7.3	6.9	1.0-2.5	1.8	4.0
5999 pt.	Optical goods stores*	3.7-4.6	4.1	3.9-4.2	4.0	0.7-1.9	1.1	3.8
	Nondurable goods, total	1.0-1.3	1.2	1.0-1.3	1.2	0.1-0.5	0.2	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores	0.1-0.2	0.1	0.1-0.1	0.1	0.0-0.1	0.1	0.1
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ³	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including							
	leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including, leased							
	depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including,							
	leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
533	Variety stores	1.9-2.6	2.3	1.9-2.4	2.3	0.2-1.2	0.7	1.2
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	0.4-0.8	0.6	0.4-0.7	0.6	0.2-0.4	0.3	0.4
54	Food group stores	1.2-1.4	1.3	1.2-1.4	1.3	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.5
541	Grocery stores	1.3-1.4	1.3	1.2-1.4	1.3	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.5
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	9.0-10.1	9.2	8.8-9.6	9.4	0.9-3.7	2.5	5.6
543	Fruit stores & vegetable markets*	10.7-14.3	12.3	11.0-12.7	11.8	1.0-7.5	2.7	5.5
544	Candy, nut, confectionery stores*	4.9-9.7	6.5	4.7-9.7	6.6	2.0-5.1	3.5	7.3
546	Retail bakeries	9.5-11.0	10.3	9.6-10.4	10.2	0.9-3.0	1.8	6.3
554	Gasoline service stations	2.0-2.3	2.1	2.1-2.2	2.1	0.2-0.5	0.3	0.8
56	Apparel & accessory stores	1.3-2.0	1.6	1.3-2.0	1.6	0.4-0.7	0.5	1.0
561	Mens & boys clothing, furnishings.	2.5-3.1	2.6	2.4-3.1	2.6	0.7-1.7	0.9	2.0
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	3.4-4.4	3.9	3.3-4.9	3.9	0.8-1.3	1.0	1.3
562	Women's ready to wear stores	3.9-5.0	4.5	3.9-5.4	4.6	0.8-1.3	1.0	1.4
565	Family clothing stores	1.3-2.4	2.1	1.3-2.4	1.9	0.4-1.3	0.7	1.3
566	Shoe stores	4.2-7.2	4.9	3.7-7.1	4.9	0.9-2.3	1.5	2.2
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1-6.2	5.7	5.2-6.1	5.6	0.4-1.2	0.7	1.6
5812	Eating places	5.4-6.6	6.0	5.5-6.5	5.9	0.4-1.3	0.8	1.7
5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	10.0-11.7	10.8	9.8-11.5	10.6	0.7-2.0	1.1	2.6
5812 pt.	Refreshment places	4.3-5.2	5.0	4.1-5.1	4.6	0.6-1.2	0.7	2.4
5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	3.5-4.3	4.1	3.5-4.2	3.8	0.6-1.2	1.0	2.2
591	Drug & proprietary stores	1.2-1.4	1.3	1.1-1.4	1.2	0.2-0.5	0.4	0.8
592	Liquor stores	2.5-3.5	2.9	2.4-3.1	2.7	0.4-2.1	1.0	1.8
5943	Stationery stores*	6.9-9.5	8.4	7.2-8.8	8.0	1.1-5.6	2.5	6.1
596	Nonstore retailers ⁴	5.2-7.8	6.0	5.0-7.8	5.8	1.6-6.3	2.5	3.9
5961	Total mail order ⁵	7.4-10.0	8.6	7.5-10.1	8.5	2.1-8.6	3.5	4.2
598	Fuel dealers	5.2-5.9	5.5	5.0-6.5	5.6	1.0-1.9	1.5	2.6
5992	Florist shops*	9.7-15.0	12.1	9.6-12.5	10.8	1.5-7.9	4.2	6.6
53,56,	GAF, total⁶	0.7-0.8	0.8	0.6-0.8	0.7	0.2-0.4	0.2	0.4
57,594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	2.6-3.6	3.0	2.7-3.3	3.0	0.5-2.3	1.1	1.8

*See Appendix A. Percent Change.

¹The ratio of the preliminary estimate for the current month over the final estimate for the previous month.²The ratio of the preliminary estimate to the final estimate for the same month one year ago.³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business total.⁴Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail-order.⁵The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁶GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (see Appendix A).

Note: The ranges and medians of the coefficients of variation shown above for the preliminary and final estimates and the ratio of change in sales are based on sales estimates for the six most recent data months.

Table B-2. **Estimated Coefficients of Variation in Percent for Inventories by Kinds of Business**

[Based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variations]

Sic code	Kind of business	Dollar volume inventory estimates	Ratio of 2 consecutive months	Ratio to same month a year ago ¹	SIC code	Kind of business	Dollar volume inventory estimates	Ratio of 2 consecutive months	Ratio to same month a year ago ¹
	Retail Inventories, total	1.2	0.2	0.4		Nondurable goods, total.	0.8	0.1	0.3
	Durable goods, total	2.2	0.3	0.8	53	General merchandise group stores.	0.6	0.0	0.3
52	Building materials group stores	3.3	0.3	1.1	531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) .	0.4	0.0	0.0
55 ex 554	Automotive group	2.2	0.4	1.0	54	Food group stores	1.3	0.1	0.6
57	Furniture group stores	1.7	0.4	0.8	56	Apparel & accessory stores	3.9	0.5	1.6

¹The ratio of the preliminary estimate to the final estimate for the same month 1 year ago.

Note: The coefficients of variation are based on inventories estimates for the six most recent data months.

MONTHLY REVISIONS TO ESTIMATES

Each month the Census Bureau issues three sets of estimates of retail sales: advance, preliminary, and final; two estimates of retail inventories—preliminary and final—are also issued. The Bureau releases “non-final” advance and preliminary data to provide government and private data users with much demanded early measures of consumer spending. However, a necessary part of the process of issuing these early data entails the resultant issuance of minor subsequent revisions. These revisions to the monthly sales and inventories estimates occur because the advance and preliminary estimates are released prior to the collection of all data eventually used in the calculation of the final monthly retail sales and inventories estimates.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau’s retail survey panels. Because of the early reporting and the sampling variability between the subsample and the full sample, the advance estimates will differ from the subsequent estimates for the same month. There are also

differences between the preliminary and final sales estimates because of the difference in the samples as described in the section, “Use of the Rotating Sample and Composite Estimate Procedures” and such nonsampling errors as indicated in Appendix B, “Reliability of Data.” The inventories estimates are also developed from rotating samples of respondents, i.e., most respondents are canvassed at 3 month intervals. Therefore, the differences between the preliminary and final inventories estimates for the same month are due to sampling and nonsampling errors.

For total retail sales, the range of the difference between the last 12 advance and final estimates for the same months was from –0.6 percent to +2.8 percent, with a median of +0.9 percent. The range of difference between preliminary and final estimates was from –1.0 percent to +2.6 percent, with a median of 0.6 percent. The preliminary-to-final difference for total retail inventories over the last 12 months ranged from –0.4 percent to +1.4 percent, with a median of 0.0 percent.

Table B-3. Seasonally Adjusted Advance, Preliminary, and Final Retail Sales Estimates

SIC code	Kind of business	March 1997 (millions of dollars)			Percent differences last 12 months					
					Final/advance			Final/preliminary		
		Advance	Preliminary	Final	Range		Median	Range		Median
					From	To		From	To	
	Retail sales, total	213,634	212,965	212,342	–0.6	2.8	0.9	–1.0	2.6	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)	161,217	160,609	160,484	–0.5	3.1	0.9	–0.5	3.0	0.6
	Durable goods, total	87,980	87,500	87,042	–1.1	3.5	0.9	–1.6	3.1	0.9
52	Building materials group stores	11,964	12,022	12,075	–1.9	12.1	1.4	–2.2	9.9	1.1
55 ex 554	Automotive group	52,417	52,356	51,858	–2.7	3.8	0.7	–3.8	2.9	0.3
57	Furniture group stores	11,644	11,458	11,496	–1.3	3.7	0.8	–2.6	3.7	0.5
	Nondurable goods, total	125,654	125,465	125,300	–0.3	2.4	0.8	–0.5	2.3	0.6
53	General merchandise group stores	27,709	27,491	27,388	–10.7	3.3	0.7	–10.4	3.2	0.3
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	21,815	21,625	21,548	–1.2	3.5	1.3	–0.4	2.9	0.8
54	Food stores	36,073	36,056	36,165	–0.2	2.0	0.5	–0.4	1.8	0.6
541	Grocery stores	34,037	33,972	34,084	–0.5	2.4	0.5	–0.5	2.0	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations	13,198	13,279	13,289	–4.0	8.7	1.1	–4.0	8.7	0.7
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,812	9,616	9,572	–2.8	4.1	0.6	–1.9	3.4	–0.3
58	Eating and drinking places	20,305	20,498	20,361	–1.8	4.2	1.1	–2.1	3.7	0.4
591	Drug & proprietary stores	8,107	8,137	8,111	0.0	3.1	2.3	–0.3	3.0	1.8

Table B-4. Seasonally Adjusted Preliminary and Final Inventories Estimates

SIC code	Kind of business	March 1997 (millions of dollars)		Percent differences last 12 months (final/preliminary)		
				Range		Median
		Preliminary	Final	From	To	
	Retail sales, total	316,507	315,427	–0.4	1.4	0.0
	Total (excl. automotive group)	227,655	226,843	–0.4	1.2	–0.1
	Durable goods, total	168,564	167,444	–0.7	1.3	0.1
52	Building materials group stores	22,728	22,835	–0.9	0.8	0.0
55 ex 554	Automotive group	88,852	88,584	–0.6	1.9	0.1
57	Furniture group stores	22,829	22,712	–5.1	1.2	0.0
	Nondurable goods, total	147,943	147,983	–0.3	1.5	0.0
53	General merchandise group stores	57,936	58,056	–0.2	1.6	0.0
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	47,575	47,623	–0.2	1.3	0.0
54	Food stores	28,600	28,667	–1.1	0.9	0.1
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,933	23,794	–1.2	2.3	–0.2

Appendix C.

Adjustment Factors for Seasonal and Other Variations

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been derived by the use of the X-11 ARIMA program developed by Statistics Canada. The program produces factors by using the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, Revised 1967. The forecasting options were not used as input to the X-11 ARIMA program. This adjustment program develops more accurate computations and diagnostics than the previously used program. Trading-day factors for adjusting retail sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustments could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in consumer buying patterns during holiday periods, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal, trading-day, and holiday patterns.

A description of trading-day adjustment factors may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Holiday adjustment factors were developed by a method similar to that described in *Seasonal Adjustment on Electronic Computers*, pp. 356-359, Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, 1961. Additional details concerning the adjustment factors may be obtained from the Chief, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233.

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary and advance estimates) as input to the X-11 program. When unadjusted advance, preliminary, and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the advance, (one month after the preliminary) preliminary, and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the advance and preliminary months.

Tables C-1 and C-2 present, by kind of business, the combined seasonal, trading-day, and holiday adjustment factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For kinds of business whose last observation is an advance estimate, two months of projected factors are shown. For all other kinds of business, three months of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

Table C-1. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	1996										1997						
		Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
	Retail trade, total	0.996	1.000	0.995	0.983	0.969	0.975	1.004	1.062	1.077	0.983	0.971	0.984	0.995	1.000	0.995	0.983	0.969
	Durable goods, total	1.015	1.019	1.016	1.001	0.959	0.953	0.970	1.018	1.043	1.004	0.993	1.006	1.013	1.019	1.016	1.001	0.958
52	Building materials group stores	1.033	1.044	1.044	1.020	1.000	0.987	0.976	0.987	0.980	0.966	0.969	0.992	1.032	1.044	1.044	1.020	1.000
55 ex	Automotive group	1.047	1.042	1.037	1.017	0.942	0.915	0.924	0.967	1.007	1.032	1.025	1.044	1.044	1.042	1.036	1.016	0.940
554	Furniture group stores	0.962	0.967	0.964	0.961	0.953	0.982	1.032	1.109	1.139	1.005	0.968	0.955	0.961	0.967	0.964	0.961	0.952
57	Nondurable goods, total	0.977	0.980	0.972	0.961	0.978	0.998	1.039	1.107	1.116	0.961	0.949	0.961	0.975	0.979	0.973	0.961	0.979
53	General merchandise group stores	0.968	0.974	0.968	0.949	0.965	0.992	1.059	1.155	1.177	0.928	0.920	0.944	0.965	0.973	0.968	0.949	0.965
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.969	0.975	0.970	0.948	0.964	0.993	1.059	1.153	1.177	0.927	0.918	0.947	0.966	0.974	0.970	0.948	0.964
54	Food group stores	0.995	0.990	0.985	0.987	0.983	0.975	0.992	1.028	1.046	1.025	1.005	0.988	0.995	0.990	0.984	0.987	0.982
56	Apparel & accessory stores	0.977	0.986	0.964	0.950	1.003	1.036	1.069	1.136	1.138	0.911	0.891	0.943	0.975	0.986	0.965	0.951	1.001

Note: Data are adjusted for seasonal variations. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (1 month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. Adjustment factors are not included in this table for kinds of business that are not published separately. Adjusted inventory data are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for corresponding kinds of business. Adjusted data for the summary trade totals are obtained by summarizing the adjusted data for the individual kinds of business. The options used to derive factors for each kind of business were selected during the last benchmarking operation and will not be subject to modification until the next benchmarking operation. These options are available upon request.

Table C-2. Combined Seasonal, Trading-Day, and Holiday Adjustment Factors for U.S. Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	1996										1997						
		Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
	Retail sales, total . . .	0.991	0.978	1.050	1.008	1.005	1.045	0.955	1.010	1.024	1.184	0.885	0.860	0.987	0.980	1.052	1.005	1.010
	Durable goods, total . . .	1.001	1.017	1.084	1.041	1.040	1.058	0.964	1.017	0.967	1.077	0.866	0.858	1.002	1.014	1.080	1.048	1.046
52	Building materials group																	
	stores	0.921	1.079	1.192	1.118	1.103	1.089	1.023	1.082	0.966	0.909	0.762	0.744	0.925	1.072	1.189	1.126	1.107
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	0.929	1.060	1.148	1.097	1.118	1.101	1.035	1.102	0.974	0.889	0.784	0.766	0.931	1.047	1.146	1.112	1.120
525	Hardware stores	0.891	1.051	1.169	1.112	1.070	1.043	0.955	1.021	1.026	1.046	0.839	0.755	0.897	1.042	1.190	1.107	1.068
55 ex 554	Automotive group	1.056	1.056	1.114	1.067	1.066	1.070	0.970	1.021	0.915	0.870	0.891	0.898	1.054	1.053	1.104	1.077	1.073
551,2, 5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	1.062	1.058	1.118	1.069	1.064	1.068	0.969	1.016	0.911	0.866	0.892	0.903	1.058	1.056	1.107	1.080	1.070
553	Auto & Home supply stores	0.985	1.023	1.059	1.047	1.082	1.086	0.997	1.062	0.996	0.931	0.890	0.839	0.987	1.021	1.056	1.052	1.085
57	Furniture group stores . . .	0.953	0.914	0.952	0.945	0.957	1.010	0.955	1.002	1.116	1.404	0.914	0.864	0.952	0.911	0.957	0.938	0.962
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.960	0.942	0.992	0.970	1.004	1.039	0.980	1.036	1.127	1.188	0.903	0.849	0.960	0.940	0.995	0.965	1.004
5722, 31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	0.948	0.888	0.917	0.920	0.921	0.981	0.930	0.974	1.120	1.579	0.953	0.866	0.945	0.886	0.918	0.923	0.913
	Nondurable goods, total	0.979	0.957	1.025	0.985	0.983	1.038	0.948	1.005	1.059	1.256	0.898	0.862	0.980	0.953	1.032	0.978	0.988
53	General merchandise group stores	0.915	0.904	0.993	0.959	0.912	1.009	0.908	0.981	1.180	1.680	0.760	0.779	0.928	0.895	0.998	0.952	0.919
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.926	0.894	0.985	0.949	0.902	1.011	0.905	0.974	1.203	1.718	0.744	0.768	0.931	0.889	0.992	0.941	0.907
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.)	0.918	0.900	0.987	0.948	0.901	1.011	0.906	0.975	1.205	1.716	0.745	0.766	0.930	0.892	0.999	0.940	0.906
533	Variety stores	0.934	0.932	1.028	0.935	0.905	0.992	0.894	0.995	1.105	1.714	0.742	0.787	0.977	0.891	1.024	0.943	0.923
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	0.914	0.902	1.013	0.994	0.948	1.002	0.911	1.002	1.117	1.537	0.822	0.810	0.915	0.905	1.022	0.982	0.962
54	Food group stores	1.005	0.969	1.038	1.008	1.026	1.044	0.957	0.994	1.007	1.063	0.981	0.902	1.006	0.964	1.047	0.995	1.034
541	Grocery stores	1.006	0.969	1.039	1.009	1.028	1.047	0.958	0.994	1.007	1.049	0.985	0.903	1.007	0.965	1.048	0.996	1.036
554	Gasoline service stations .	0.977	0.986	1.058	1.051	1.067	1.082	0.992	1.020	0.979	0.981	0.933	0.878	0.976	0.985	1.064	1.050	1.063
56	Apparel & accessory stores	0.945	0.943	0.989	0.937	0.909	1.094	0.945	1.006	1.151	1.601	0.720	0.743	0.974	0.907	1.010	0.921	0.918
561	Mens & boys clothing, furnishings	0.894	0.904	0.961	0.965	0.824	0.934	0.900	0.985	1.147	1.867	0.828	0.774	0.910	0.874	0.982	0.949	0.830
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	0.967	0.963	1.044	0.960	0.895	1.012	0.945	1.011	1.118	1.592	0.712	0.759	0.985	0.943	1.059	0.947	0.893
566	Shoe stores	1.002	1.021	1.044	0.988	0.963	1.254	0.973	0.950	1.033	1.273	0.725	0.764	1.067	0.947	1.072	0.974	0.976
58	Eating and drinking places	1.017	0.992	1.056	1.039	1.044	1.087	0.981	1.012	0.977	0.991	0.913	0.893	1.002	0.996	1.066	1.029	1.050
591	Drug & proprietary stores . . .	1.005	0.990	1.023	0.959	0.974	0.988	0.930	0.991	0.980	1.231	0.988	0.936	1.021	0.971	1.017	0.968	0.969
592	Liquor stores	0.952	0.933	1.014	1.008	1.049	1.054	0.936	0.976	1.041	1.322	0.881	0.830	0.949	0.920	1.039	0.986	1.056
53,56, 57,594	GAF, total	0.916	0.905	0.975	0.940	0.918	1.024	0.917	0.983	1.161	1.676	0.786	0.778	0.927	0.892	0.984	0.933	0.923

Note: Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. The sales adjustment factors are not included in this table for those kinds of business for which adjusted data are not published separately. Adjusted sales data are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for corresponding kinds of business. Adjusted data for the summary trade totals are obtained by summarizing the adjusted data for the individual kinds of business. The options used to derive factors for each kind of business were selected during the last benchmarking operation and will not be subject to modification until the next benchmarking operation. These options are available upon request.

Appendix D.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Retail trade SIC Major Groups 52-59, includes establishments primarily engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of goods.

The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications defined in the 1987 edition of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) manual. Descriptions of each kind of business follow. Data for some kinds of business are not shown separately but are included in the major group of other totals.

DURABLE GOODS

Building Materials, Hardware, Garden Supply, and Mobile Home Dealers (SIC Major Group 52). This major group includes retail establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and other building materials; paint, glass, and wallpaper; hardware; nursery stock; lawn and garden supplies; and mobile homes. It includes lumber and other building materials dealers and paint, glass, and wallpaper stores selling to the general public, even if sales to contractors account for a larger proportion of total sales. These establishments are known as “retail” in the trade. Establishments primarily selling these products but not selling to the general public are classified in wholesale trade.

Lumber and Other Building Materials Dealers (SIC 521).¹ Establishments engaged in selling primarily lumber, or lumber and a general line of building materials, to the general public. The lumber which they sell may include rough and dressed lumber, flooring, molding, doors, sashes, frames, and other millwork. The building materials may include roofing, siding, shingles, wallboard, paint, brick, tile, cement, sand, gravel, and other building materials and supplies. Hardware is often an important line of retail lumber and building materials dealers. Establishments known as “home centers” are included here.

Paint, Glass, and Wallpaper Stores (SIC 523).¹ Establishments engaged in selling primarily paint, glass, and wallpaper, or any combination of these lines, to the general public.

¹Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group totals.

Hardware Stores (SIC 525). Establishments primarily selling a number of basic hardware lines such as tools, builders' hardware, paint and glass, housewares and household appliances, cutlery, and roofing materials, no one of which accounts for 50 percent or more of the sales of the establishments.

Retail Nurseries, Lawn and Garden Supply Stores (SIC 526).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in selling trees, shrubs, other plants, seeds, bulbs, mulches, soil conditioners, fertilizers, pesticides, garden tools, and other garden supplies to the general public. These establishments primarily sell products purchased from others, but may sell some plants which they grow themselves.

Mobile Home Dealers (SIC 527).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used mobile homes, including parts and accessories.

Automotive Group (SIC Major Group 55, ex. 554)

This major group includes retail dealers selling new and used automobiles, boats, recreational trailers, and motorcycles; and those selling new automobile parts and accessories. Automobile repair shops maintained by the establishments engaged in the sale of new automobiles are also included.

Motor Vehicle Dealers (Franchised)—New and Used (SIC 551). Establishments primarily engaged in the sale of new automobiles or new and used foreign or domestic automobiles. These establishments frequently maintain repair departments and used car lots and carry stocks of replacement parts, tires, batteries, and automotive accessories. Used car lots and repair departments operated by franchised new passenger car dealers are not considered separate locations.

Motor Vehicle Dealers (Nonfranchised)—Used Cars Only (SIC 552).¹ Establishments primarily selling used cars and not holding a franchise for the sale of new cars.

Auto and Home Supply Stores (SIC 553). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of automobile tires, batteries, and other automobile parts and accessories. These establishments frequently sell additional lines of merchandise such as household appliances, radios and television sets, sporting goods, housewares, and hardware.

Boat Dealers (SIC 555).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used motorboats and other watercraft, including parts, accessories, marine supplies, and outboard motors.

Recreational Vehicle Dealers (SIC 556).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used recreational trailers, campers (pickup coaches), and other trailers for passenger automobiles, and motor homes, including parts and accessories.

Motorcycle Dealers (SIC 557).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used motorcycles and motor scooters, including parts and accessories.

Automotive Dealers, Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 559).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used automotive vehicles, such as snowmobiles, dunebuggies, go-carts, aircraft, utility trailers, and new automotive equipment and supplies, not elsewhere classified.

Furniture, Home Furnishings, and Equipment Stores (SIC Major Group 57)

This major group includes retail stores selling goods used for furnishing the home, such as furniture, floor coverings, draperies, glass and chinaware, domestic stoves, refrigerators, and other household electrical and gas appliances.

Furniture Stores (SIC 5712). Establishments primarily selling household furniture, beds, mattresses, springs, and other sleep equipment. Also included in this classification are establishments selling household appliances, phonographs, radio and TV sets, and floor coverings, provided the receipts from sales of furniture and sleep equipment exceed those from sales of other merchandise.

Floor Coverings Stores (SIC 5713). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of floor coverings and related products.

Drapery, Curtain, and Upholstery Stores (SIC 5714).¹ Establishments primarily selling draperies, curtains, slipcovers, and upholstery materials. Establishments primarily selling custom made draperies and slipcovers for household use also are included.

Miscellaneous Home Furnishing Stores (SIC 5719).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of miscellaneous home furnishings, such as china, glassware, and metalware for kitchen and table use, bedding and linen, brooms, brushes, lamps and shades, mirrors and pictures, venetian blinds, window shades, and fireplace accessories.

Household Appliance Stores (SIC 5722). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of electric and gas refrigerators, stoves, and other household appliances, such as electric irons, percolators, hot plates, and vacuum cleaners. Many such stores also sell radio and television sets. Retail stores operated by public utility companies and primarily engaged in the sale of electric and gas appliances for household use are classified here.

Radio, Television, and Electronics Stores (SIC 5731). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale and installation of radios, television sets, record players, high fidelity (hi-fi), sound reproducing equipment and home computers. Such establishments also may sell additional lines, such as household appliances, musical instruments, or records.

Computer and Computer Software Stores (SIC 5734). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of computers, computer peripheral equipment, and software.

Music Stores (SIC 5735 + 5736).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of musical instruments, phonograph records and albums, sheet music, and similar musical supplies.

Miscellaneous Durable Goods Stores (SIC Major Group 59 part)

This includes all retail durable goods stores not elsewhere classified.

Used Merchandise Stores (SIC 593).² This industry includes stores primarily engaged in the retail sale of used merchandise, antiques, and secondhand goods such as clothing and shoes; furniture; books and rare manuscripts; musical instruments; office furniture, phonographs and phonograph records; and store fixtures and equipment. This industry also includes pawnshops.

Sporting Goods Stores and Bicycle Shops (SIC 5941). Establishments primarily selling a general or a specialized line of sporting goods and equipment for hunting, camping, fishing, skiing, riding, tennis, golf, and other sports; bicycles, bicycle parts and accessories; and gymnasium and playground equipment.

Book Stores (SIC 5942). Establishments primarily selling new books and periodicals. Stationery and related items may also be sold.

Jewelry Stores (SIC 5944). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of any combination of the lines of jewelry, such as diamonds and other precious stones; rings, bracelets, and brooches; sterling and plated silverware; and watches and clocks.

²Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the durable goods stores total.

Hobby, Toy, and Game Shops (SIC 5945).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of toys, games, and hobby kits and supplies.

Camera and Photographic Supply Stores (SIC 5946).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cameras, film, and other photographic supplies and equipment. Excluded are establishments primarily engaged in finishing films.

Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Shops (SIC 5947).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of combined lines of gifts and novelty merchandise, souvenirs, and miscellaneous small art goods such as greeting cards and holiday decorations.

Luggage and Leather Goods Stores (SIC 5948).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of luggage, trunks, and leather goods.

Optical Goods Stores (SIC 5995).² Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of eyeglasses and related optical goods. Excluded are establishments whose receipts are primarily from examining eyes and prescribing eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Miscellaneous Retail Stores Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 5999).² Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized lines of merchandise such as collectors' items and supplies, artists' supplies, orthopedic and artificial limbs, drafting materials, typewriters, telephones, pets, religious goods, hearing aids, rubber stamps, monuments and tombstones, and other merchandise not elsewhere classified.

NONDURABLE GOODS

General Merchandise Group Stores (SIC Major Group 53)

This major group includes retail stores which sell a number of lines of merchandise, such as dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware, and food. The stores included in this group are known as department stores, variety stores, general merchandise stores, general stores, etc.

Department Stores (SIC 531). Establishments normally employing 50 people or more, having sales of apparel and soft goods combined amounting to 20 percent or more of total sales, and selling each of the following lines of merchandise:

1. Furniture, home furnishings, appliances, and radio and TV sets.
2. A general line of apparel for the family.
3. Household linens and dry goods.

To qualify as a department store, sales of each of the lines listed above must be less than 80 percent of total store sales. An establishment with total sales of \$10 million or more is classified as a department store even if sales of one of the merchandise lines listed above exceed the maximum percent of total sales, provided that the combined sales of the other two groups are \$1 million or more. Department store sales have been separately presented for the following classifications:

Department stores (incl. leased depts.), and
Department stores (excl. leased depts.).

Department stores (incl. leased depts.) are also sub-categorized as shown below:

Conventional Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and:

1. Usually provide check-out service and customer assistance (salespersons) within each department.
2. May have a catalog order desk.
3. Are not affiliated with a company which operates similar establishments on a national basis.

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods and hard goods which are primarily nationally advertised brands.
2. Appliances which are serviced by another company.
3. Limited lines of merchandise through seasonal or special catalogs.

Discount or Mass Merchandising Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and usually:

1. Convey the image of a high-volume, fast turnover outlet selling a variety of merchandise for less than conventional prices.
2. Provide centralized check-out service.
3. Do not provide customer assistance within store departments. Merchandise is normally sold through self-service with minimal assistance provided in any department.
4. Do not have a catalog order desk.

³Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: miscellaneous shopping goods stores (594).

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods which are usually their own corporate brands or are unbranded.
2. Hard goods which are primarily nationally advertised brands.
3. Appliances which are serviced by another company.

National Chain Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and:

1. Usually provide check-out service and customer assistance (salespersons) within each department.
2. May have a catalog order desk.
3. Are affiliated with a company which operates similar establishments on a national basis.

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods and hard goods which are their own corporate brands or are unbranded.
2. Appliances which are serviced by their own company.

Variety Stores (SIC 533). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a variety of merchandise in the low and popular price ranges. Sales usually are made on a cash-and-carry basis with the open selling method of display and customer selection of merchandise. These stores generally do not carry a complete line of merchandise, are not departmentalized, do not carry their own charge service, and do not deliver merchandise.

Miscellaneous General Merchandise Stores (SIC 539). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a general line of apparel, dry goods, hardware, homewares or home furnishings, groceries, and other lines in limited amounts. Stores selling commodities covered in the definition for department stores, but normally having less than 50 employees, and stores usually known as catalog showrooms, country general stores, or warehouse clubs are included here. Also included in this classification are establishments whose sales of apparel or of furniture and home furnishings exceed half of their total sales providing that sales of the smaller of the two lines in combination with dry goods and household linens account for 20 percent or more of total sales.

Food Stores (SIC Major Group 54)

This major group includes retail stores primarily engaged in selling food for home preparation and consumption.

Grocery Stores (SIC 541). Establishments primarily selling (1) a wide variety of canned or frozen foods, such as vegetables, fruits, and soups; (2) dry groceries, either packaged or in bulk, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, spices, sugar, flour, and crackers; and (3) other processed foods and nonedible grocery items. In addition, these establishments often sell smoked and prepared meats, fresh fish and poultry, fresh vegetables and fruits, and fresh or frozen meats.

Establishments commonly known as supermarkets, food stores, convenience stores, and delicatessens are included in this classification if receipts from sales of groceries and food items for off-premise preparation and consumption are 50 percent or more of total sales.

Meat and Fish (Seafood) Markets, Including Freezer Provisioners (SIC 542). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of fresh, frozen, or cured meats, fish, shellfish, and other seafood. Frequently these establishments also sell poultry, dairy products, eggs, some groceries, and items commonly used in preparing seafood or consumed with seafood.

Fruit Stores and Vegetable Markets (SIC 543).¹ Establishments primarily selling fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. These establishments frequently carry a limited line of grocery items. Roadside stands of farmers selling only their own produce are not included.

Candy, Nut, and Confectionery Stores (SIC 544).¹ Establishments primarily selling candy, nuts, sweetmeats, and other confections. A soda fountain or lunch counter is frequently operated in these stores. Also included are candy and popcorn stands located in motion picture theaters.

Dairy Products Stores (SIC 545).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of dairy products, such as milk, cream, butter, cheese, and related products, to over-the-counter customers.

Retail Bakeries (SIC 546). Establishments primarily engaged in the over-the-counter retail sale of bakery products such as bread, cakes, pies, or cookies, all or some of which may be baked on the premises.

Other Miscellaneous Food Stores (SIC 549).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized foods, not elsewhere classified, such as eggs and poultry, health foods, spices, herbs, coffee, and tea. The poultry stores may sell live poultry, slaughter and clean poultry for their own account and sell dressed fowls, or sell fowl cleaned and dressed by others.

Gasoline Service Stations (SIC 554)

Establishments primarily selling gasoline and automotive lubricants. Usually these establishments also sell tires, batteries, and accessories, and perform minor repair work

and services. Establishments called garages but deriving more than half of their receipts from the sale of gasoline and automotive lubricants and establishments known as truck stops which are primarily engaged in selling diesel fuel to truckers are also included. Convenience food stores deriving more than 50 percent of their sales from the sale of gasoline are classified as gasoline service stations.

Apparel and Accessory Stores (SIC Major Group 56)

Establishments in this major group are primarily engaged in selling clothing of all kinds and related articles for personal wear and adornment.

Men's and Boys' Clothing and Furnishings Stores (SIC 561). Establishments primarily selling men's and boys' ready-to-wear clothing and furnishings.

Women's Ready-to-Wear Stores (SIC 562). Establishments primarily selling women's and girls' ready-to-wear apparel.

Women's Accessory and Specialty Stores (SIC 563).¹ Establishments primarily selling a specialized line of women's and girls' apparel, such as furs, sportswear, beachwear, blouses, hosiery, millinery, foundation garments, lingerie, robes, and other intimate wear.

Children's and Infants' Wear Stores (SIC 564).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of children's and infants' clothing, furnishings, and accessories. Such establishments may specialize in either children's or infants' wear or they may sell a combination of children's and infants' wear.

Family Clothing Stores (SIC 565). Establishments primarily selling clothing, furnishings, and accessories for men, women, and children, without specializing in any one line.

Shoe Stores (SIC 566). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of any one line, or a combination of the lines, of men's, women's, and children's footwear. These establishments frequently carry accessory lines such as hosiery, gloves, and handbags.

Miscellaneous Apparel and Accessory Stores (SIC 569).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized lines of apparel and accessories not elsewhere classified, such as uniforms, bathing suits, raincoats, riding apparel, sports apparel, umbrellas, wigs, and toupees. This industry also includes custom tailors primarily engaged in making and selling men's and women's clothing (except fur apparel SIC 568) to individual order.

Eating and Drinking Places (SIC Major Group 58)

Establishments in this major group are primarily engaged in selling prepared foods and drinks for consumption on or near the premises and lunch counters and refreshment stands selling prepared foods and drinks for immediate consumption.

Restaurants, Lunchrooms, Cafeterias, and Contract Feeding (SIC 5812 part)

*Restaurants and Lunchrooms.*⁴ Establishments engaged in serving prepared food and beverages selected by the patron from a full menu. Waiter or waitress service is provided and the establishment has seating facilities for at least 15 patrons. These establishments often serve alcoholic beverages, but receipts from the sale of alcoholic beverages may not exceed the receipts from prepared food.

*Cafeterias.*⁴ Establishments engaged in serving prepared food and beverages primarily through the use of a cafeteria line where customers serve themselves from displayed selections. Some limited waiter or waitress service may be provided. Table and/or booth seating facilities are usually provided.

*Contract Feeding.*⁴ Establishments primarily engaged in providing food service under contract to another company; hospital; or governmental, penal, or educational institution. The facilities and personnel of these establishments may be provided by the contracting company, institutions, etc., however, the management is always supplied by the contractor.

Social Caterers (SIC 5812 part).⁵ Establishments primarily engaged in serving prepared food and beverages for weddings, banquets, etc., on the premises or elsewhere. Such establishments also may arrange for some entertainment but this should be a minor part of the business.

Refreshment Places, Ice Cream, and Frozen Custard Stands, (SIC 5812 part).

*Refreshment Places.*⁶ Establishments primarily selling limited lines of refreshments and prepared food items. Included in this group are establishments which prepare refreshment items such as pizza, barbecued chicken, and hamburgers for consumption either on or near the premises or for take-home consumption.

⁴Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Restaurants, Lunchrooms, Cafeterias.

⁵Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Eating Places (SIC 5812).

⁶Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Refreshment Places (SIC 5812 pt.).

*Ice Cream and Frozen Custard Stands.*⁶ Establishments primarily engaged in selling ice cream, frozen custard, or other frozen ices for consumption either on or near the premises. Take-home packages also may be provided for ice cream sold in bulk.

Drinking Places (SIC 5813). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of drinks such as beer, ale, wine, liquor, and other alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises. Prepared foods are frequently sold at these establishments, but receipts from the sale of prepared foods may not exceed receipts from sales of alcoholic beverages.

Drug Stores and Proprietary Stores (SIC 591)

Establishments engaged in the retail sale of prescription drugs and patent medicines and which may carry a number of related lines such as cosmetics, toiletries, tobacco, and novelty merchandise. Included are drug stores which also have a soda fountain or lunch counter. These stores are included on the basis of their usual trade designation rather than on the more strict interpretation of commodities handled.

Liquor Stores (SIC 592)

Establishments primarily selling packaged alcoholic beverages, such as ale, beer, wine, and whiskey, for consumption off the premises. Liquor stores operated by States, counties, and municipalities are included.

Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Stores (SIC Major Group 59, part)

This includes all retail nondurable goods stores not elsewhere classified.

Miscellaneous Shopping Goods Stores (SIC 594)

Establishments engaged in the retail sale of one or more lines of merchandise similar to that found in department stores.

Stationery Stores (SIC 5943).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of stationery, such as paper and paper products (including printing and engraving), post cards, novelties, and school and office supplies (excluding office furniture and machines).

Sewing, Needlework, and Piece Goods Stores (SIC 5949).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of piece goods, notions, sewing and knitting supplies, fabrics, patterns, and other needlework accessories.

Mail-Order Houses (Department Store Merchandise) (SIC 5961 part). Establishments with normally 50 or more employees primarily engaged in the retail sale by catalog and mail order of a general line of merchandise similar to that sold by department stores.

Other Mail-Order Houses (SIC 5961 part). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a specialized or limited line of merchandise such as food, automotive merchandise, apparel, books, stationery, etc., by catalog and mail order.

Automatic Merchandising Machine Operators (SIC 5962).⁷ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of products by means of automatic merchandising units (vending machines) which are generally located on the premises of other businesses. Those products include candy, nut, and confectionery; milk and ice cream; other beverages; and tobacco products.

Direct Selling Establishments (SIC 5963).⁷ Establishments primarily selling merchandise by house-to-house canvass, by party plan, by telephone, or from a truck. The merchandise includes building materials, hardware, and garden supplies; general merchandise, milk; other foods; apparel and accessories; furniture, home furnishings, and equipment; mobile food service; and books and stationery.

Fuel Oil Dealers (SIC 5983).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of fuel oil.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Dealers (SIC 5984).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of liquefied petroleum (LP) gas (bottled gas or in bulk.)

Fuel Dealers, Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 5989).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of coal, coke, charcoal, wood, or any combination of these lines.

Florists (SIC 5992).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cut flowers and growing plants. Greenhouses and nurseries are included if receipts are primarily from the sale of products not grown on the premises.

Cigar Stores and Stands (SIC 5993).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, and smokers' supplies. Many of the establishments included in this classification are operated as concessions in places of amusement, railway stations, airports, and other public places.

News Dealers and Newsstands (SIC 5994).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals.

⁷Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Nonstore Retailers (SIC 596).

⁸Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the nondurable goods stores total.